

**Vision 21 Implementation Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 1, 2006**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Members Present: Austin Bliss, Vinnie DeNovellis, Victoria Hasse, Sara Oaklander, Ann Rittenburg, Paul Santos, Meg O'Brien, Jennifer Page.

Members Absent: Donna Brescia,, Paul Solomon, Jay Szklut

1. Administrivia

Meg O'Brien served as recorder.

Chair, Jennifer Page asked which committee members wanted to attend the meeting about planning for Cushing Square occurring concurrently with the VIC meeting.

Approval of the minutes of the May 18, 2006 meeting was deferred until agreement is established as to whether or not there was an informal understanding at the last meeting that we would have public meetings around the Vision. Minor corrections were made to those minutes.

Paul Santos objected to the meeting time spent on reports that have no bearing on our work.

4. Discussion of Procedures

A discussion ensued about the value of written vs. oral reports from VIC members.

Written reports e-mailed to committee members by the chair are efficient and save time.

However, they put a burden on the reporters and on the chair.

Sending the reports once a month would be less of a burden but they would lose their timeliness.

The reporter could distribute his/her reports to the VIC members.

If the report is an official report of a VIC representative to other committee meetings, the representative might have the choice of preparing an oral or a written report.

Jennifer indicated that saving reports until the end of the meeting was an attempt to limit the meeting time spent on reports.

No conclusion was reached about reports.

3. Town Day

It was a fun and lively event.

15 people joined the Sustainable Belmont Listserv.

Several people volunteered to help with Welcome to Belmont.

About 10 newcomers signed up to participate in newcomers' events, like a walk in Rock Meadow or a tour of Town Hall.

2. Public Conversations

In its mandate, the VIC has been charged with checking in with the townspeople ensure that they and the VIC are in sync about the Vision, both its content and the progress toward achieving that vision.

Paul Santos challenged how we could do this. We are likely to attract only those who are already engaged, rather than attracting those not yet engaged. We need a hook to pull people in.

At the last VIC meeting we drew up some objectives that included our objectives for these public conversations:

We agreed to invite the residents of Belmont to open dialog concerning the Vision, letting people know the Town has a Vision and what it is, and asking them to suggest ways the town can move toward achieving the Vision. From the Minutes of the VIC May 18th meeting:

“Agreement was reached on the following:

- We will commit to conducting a series of community meetings about the Vision.
- The meetings will be interactive/ participatory, engaging. People will DO things at the meetings.
- The goals are to:
 - Encourage the public to learn about the vision
 - Develop individual ownership of the vision, embrace the vision.
 - Examine where the Town is in implementing the vision and proposing next steps.
 - Promote dialog about the Town.”

Building on these goals from the last meeting, standards for evaluating the success of these Public Conversations were proposed.

Feedback from participants in the conversation about their value
Number of people attending
Whether or not the vocabulary of the Vision is used
Increased involvement
Increased dialog in the Town – such as letters to the Editor
Increased understanding of new things
Names of people who want to do these things.

A number of suggestions were offered as to how to hold these Public Conversations.

Vin encouraged us to think of it as a game, perhaps a baseball game.

Victoria suggested making it easy for the public to know parts of the Vision by "pushing" information to people. For instance, an infomercial on Channel 8.

Vin also suggested doing this as a series in an adult education course.

Ann suggested the importance of Town Meeting's unanimous approval of the Vision five years ago. We should bring it before them again to see its relevance today.

Sara could see a charette that would include writing on the wall, with different activities and a variety of ways of participating. This could include working in smaller groups or work one-on-one and then work in groups to develop ideas, recommendations, plans and move toward consensus.

It's important that we present it as an opportunity for people to contribute, not as an opportunity to learn about the Vision.

How can we get people to attend?

Ann had the idea of combining the ideas of "taking the show on the road" with other Town events. For instance, VIC could have a wall spot at "Meet Belmont." We can create giant storyboards and invite people to comment on or rank them. It will be interactive and fun. Other venues could include Town Meeting, the Library Book Sale, the High School Play, etc.

A second idea was to use a multi-pronged approach:

Use a learning format for the more substantive statements in the Vision such as regional planning. The topic could be something like "Regional Planning: How Does It

Effect Belmont?". This could be presented on Channel 8 or offered as an adult education class.

Use the portable storyboards at events as a simple way to engage people about priorities or ideas

This discussion will be continued at the next meeting.

5. Next Meeting: Thursday, June 15, 2006 from 7-9 p.m.

6. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Meg O'Brien
Secretary Pro Tempore